

Milford Port Health
Authority.

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 1945.

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

MILFORD PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY.

Chairman : S. B. MORGAN, Esq.

Vice-Chairman : W. R. DAVIES, Esq.

MEMBERS OF AUTHORITY (16) APPOINTED BY :

Haverfordwest Town Council :

S. B. MORGAN, Esq., R. G. NOOT, Esq., J.P.

Pembroke Town Council :

J. M. GIBBY, Esq., W. W. GEORGE, Esq., G. DEVONALD, Esq.,
J. GWYTHYR, Esq.

Milford Haven Urban District Council :

R. JOHN, Esq., J.P. V. CLEAVER, Esq.

Neyland Urban District Council :

W. R. DAVIES, Esq.

Haverfordwest Rural District Council :

W. J. ELKINS, Esq., G. A. JOHN, Esq., J. JOHN, Esq., J.P.

Pembroke Rural District Council :

W. JENKINS, Esq., H. D. HOWELL, Esq., E. W. GOODRICH, Esq.

Narberth Rural District Council :

W. C. JOHN, Esq.

Medical Officer of Health :

H. O. WILLIAMS, M.B., B.S. (Lond.), D.P.H.,
Milford House, Milford Haven.

Deputy Medical Officer :

D. A. RICE, M.B., B.CH., Charles Street, Milford Haven.

Sanitary Inspector :

G. S. LOGAN, M.S.I.A., A.R.SAN.I.,
“ Belvedere,” Pill Lane, Milford Haven.

Clerk :

PAXTON O. DAVIES, 33, Charles Street, Milford Haven.

REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THE YEAR 1945.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my report for the year 1945, together with certain statistics belonging to the war years.

When war broke out in September, 1939, the peaceful Port of Milford soon took on a war-like appearance. A Naval Base was established, and H.M. Forces were stationed on the docks, and at various strategic points along the Haven. The Boom Defence was laid down at the entrance to the harbour, big guns began to arrive and coast defence batteries were stationed in different localities on either side of the Haven.

Out of 120 trawlers, no fewer than 69 were requisitioned for mine sweeping; the remainder kept on fishing, and there were no casualties up to the end of 1939.

In 1940 six Milford trawlers were sunk by enemy action, two were shipwrecked, and two Belgian trawlers, fishing out of the port, were mined. One enemy aircraft was destroyed by our trawlers, others were probably badly damaged. In all there were about forty enemy attacks on the fishing fleet during the year.

In 1941, four more trawlers were requisitioned, and twelve were sunk with the loss of thirty-one lives. Towards the end of the year and during 1942 the enemy laid forty-five mines in the waters of the Haven, and the Port was closed until the mines were swept and removed. Four large merchant ships, and several small craft were sunk by mines inside the Haven.

In 1943 one trawler was attacked by enemy aircraft; the skipper was badly wounded.

During 1944 and 1945 there were no attacks on the Fishing Fleet and no more mines were laid in the Haven, and in August 1945 the Admiralty abandoned control of the Haven, naval craft gradually left your waters, and the Belgian fleet, which for the second time in 25 years had been here in exile, returned to their home ports.

Constitution of Port Sanitary Authority.

By an Order dated 21/12/75 Milford and the Riparian Districts were temporarily constituted a Port Sanitary Authority. An Order of 24th April, 1878, made this permanent. A Provisional Order of 1897 repealed the above 1878 Order, and the Port Sanitary Authority was again permanently constituted by Order of 1/9/98.

Previous to these Orders the Borough of Pembroke was temporarily constituted a Port Sanitary Authority in 1873 and acted as such until the Order of 1875 temporarily appointed Milford and the Riparian Districts as the Port Sanitary Authority.

The Joint Board at this time consisted of 13 Members, as follows :—

	<i>No. of Members.</i>
Borough of Pembroke	3
Pembroke Rural	3
Haverfordwest Rural	3
Borough of Haverfordwest	2
Narberth Rural	1
Milford Improvement Commissioners	1

By further Orders of the Local Government Board in 1898 and 1915, the constitution of the Board at present is as follows :—

The Borough of Pembroke (4).

The Borough of Haverfordwest (2).

The Urban District Council of Milford Haven (2).

The Urban District Council of Neyland (1).

The Rural District Council of Haverfordwest (3).

The Rural District Council of Narberth (1).

The Rural District Council of Pembroke (3).

Neyland Urban District was made a Constituent Authority in 1915.

Quarantine Station.

That part of the Haven bounded on the West by a line drawn 180 degrees from the Flagstaff on the Fort of South Hook Point and on the Eastward by a line joining Little Wick No. 1 Buoy, No. 3 Buoy and Pop-ton Point.

It is interesting to note that under the Quarantine Act of 1825 Milford Haven was one of the two Ports at which vessels without a clean bill of health had to perform Quarantine. This act was repealed by the Public Health Act of 1896.

Amount of Shipping entering the Port during the year.

This does not include the vessels calling at the Port for convey.

TABLE A.

<i>Foreign</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Ton'ge</i>	<i>Number Inspected</i>		<i>No.</i> <i>Defective</i>	<i>No.</i> <i>Remedied</i>
			<i>By MOH</i>	<i>By S.I.</i>		
Steamers ..	5	23553	5	5	nil	nil
Motor and Sail	5	23394	2	5	nil	nil
Fishing ..	39	961	29	39	5	5
Total ..	49	47908	36	49	5	5
<i>Coastwise</i>						
Steamers ..	58	28371	3	42	nil	nil
Motor and Sail	23	18784	2	19	nil	nil
Fishing ..	1134	86894	4	890	37	37
Total ..	1215	134029	9	951	37	37
Total Foreign and Coastwise	1264	181937	45	1000	42	42

Convoys. Early in the war it was found necessary to divert shipping from the South Coast; and Milford Haven became the centre from which ships of the Bristol channel and the West Coast were convoyed. Over 17,000 vessels, of a tonnage approximating 100,000,000 tons were dealt with during the war period.

II. Character of Trade of Port.

(a) Passenger traffic during 1945, Nil.

(b) Cargo Traffic :

Fish, Artificial Manure, Cattle Feeding Stuffs, Potatoes, Cement
General Merchandise, Oil Fuel and Octane Spirit.

Principal Exports : Blended Motor Spirit; Coal.

Deaths by Drowning. It is sad to relate that during the last four years there have been 12 deaths by drowning in Milford Docks. This number is much too high, and the authority concerned should adopt measures to reduce these fatalities.

Port Facilities. Full details are given in previous reports of the up-to-date facilities which the Docks Company has provided. During the war a new wharf, with commodious warehouses, was constructed. The Railway runs alongside, and four large cranes were installed for the expeditious unloading of ships. And recently the whole Fish Market was re-roofed. During the war period every precaution was taken against fire. Fish boxes and other inflammable material were removed and the docks were patrolled nightly by members of the N.F.S.

Ship-Repairing was an important feature of the work at the docks during the war—all repairing shops being used to full capacity. Much of this work was done in the Haven often under very hazardous conditions.

III. Source of Water Supply.

A good supply of fresh water is provided right through the Fish market for the washing of fish, boxes and stands. This is from the Milford Urban District Council Supply.

Three Water Boats in good sanitary condition supplied the ships in harbour; these were controlled by the Admiralty.

IV. Infectious Disease.

All vessels entering the Port are boarded by your Sanitary Inspector who reports any cases of infectious disease to your medical officer. Arrangements have been made with the Court Council for the immediate isolation of any such cases, other than yellow fever, cholera and plague; and arrangements have also been made for the disinfection of bedding, clothing etc., as well as for the cleansing of verminous persons. No cases were landed during the year.

Isolation Hospital.—This is situated at Sandy Haven. It is a wood and iron building—in good state of repair, but in many respects it is not a suitable building.

The first Isolation Hospital for your Authority was built at Coombes in 1877. The building is still in existence and has been converted into two houses known as Hospital Cottages, in the Marble Hall Road, within the Milford Haven Urban District.

In 1884 the Milford Improvements Commissioners objected to cases of Cholera being landed and carried through the town to this Hospital; and the Port Sanitary Authority petitioned the War Office and obtained leave to use Dale Fort for isolating Cholera patients should any arrive at the Port. In 1892 the War Office withdrew their sanction to the use of Dale Fort as a Hospital, and the Port Sanitary Authority decided to purchase a "Floating Hospital," and a vessel called "The Hayle" was bought for the sum of £110. She was moored in Castle Pill, but in 1898 it was decided to remove her to a creek in Sandy Haven. In 1908 the Local Government Board reported that this vessel was unsuitable for an Isolation Hospital and the present Hospital was built in 1910.

V. Measures against Rodents.

Ships that call at the Port usually stay one day to unload their cargo and to take in stores. These are chiefly Trawlers and small Cargo Vessels.

If rats are traced on the vessels instructions are given to set traps or poison baits. If the vessel is infested with rats it is fumigated. Trawlers are generally done with Sulphur and small Cargo Vessels are sometimes done with Hydrogen Cyanide the latter being carried out by a special firm from Newport Mon.

Eleven vessels were fumigated this year.

During his inspection the Sanitary Inspector examines all food lockers, bins, trunks, etc. for traces of rats. All owners are advised to have bins and food lockers lined with tin or sheet iron.

Gangways are not fitted to any fishing vessel, and rat proof discs are not fitted to the mooring lines.

There being no official Rat Catcher employed no record of the rats destroyed is kept.

This is not a Deratisation Port therefore no "Port II" forms are issued.

VI. Food Inspection.

Approximate Monthly Tonnage of Fish landed and Inspected during the year.

Monthly Record of Unsound Fish condemned, surrendered and destroyed.

<i>Month</i>				<i>Month</i>			
<i>Tonnage</i>				<i>Tons</i>	<i>cwts</i>	<i>qrs.</i>	
January	..	..	1833	January	..	2	3
February	..	..	1454	February	..		6
March	..	..	2979	March	..		13
April	..	..	3521	April	..		5
May	..	..	3854	May	..		1
June	..	..	5219	June	..		6
July	..	..	5153	July	..	1	2
August	..	..	5545	August	..		16
September	..	..	4840	September	..		18
October	..	..	4622	October	..	1	11
November	..	..	4739	November	..	—	—
December	..	..	3544	December	..	—	—
Total	..	..	46303	Total	..	8	4
							2

**Condemned fish and fish offal sent to the Fish Meal Factory to
be converted into Fish Meal and Fertilizers.**

<i>Month</i>		<i>Tons</i>	<i>cwts.</i>
January	..	132	12
February	..	84	18
March	..	134	10
April	..	152	3
May	..	185	14
June	..	207	7
July	..	257	16
August	..	259	1
September	..	173	4
October	..	170	17
November	..	155	10
December	..	171	9
Total	..	2085	1

On the 7th March the ss. " Empire Geraint " arrived in harbour having been torpedoed and was carrying a cargo of meat and other stores which had to be discharged. I telephoned the Ministry of Food at Cardiff and was informed that they were sending Officers to take charge of the cargo.

The Salvage Officer called on me and we realized that all food which could be saved had to be taken ashore as soon as possible.

Your Sanitary Inspector was in daily communication with this Officer, and approximately eighteen hundred tons of meat was saved for human consumption, and nine hundred and seventy six tons ten cwts. were sent to fifteen different firms for rendering down for different purposes.

The remaining part of this cargo consisted of cheese, lard, peas, grain, raisins, and was dispatched to firms named by the Ministry of Food for re-processing. This amounted to one thousand three hundred and fifty-five tons.

On the 4th of May the following foodstuffs were examined :— 1792 lbs. of sugar; 224 lbs. of salt; 224 lbs. of rice; 412 lbs. of peas (marrowfat); 112 lbs. of peas (split); 224 lbs. of haricot beans; 480 lbs. of flour; 140 lbs. of oatmeal. These stores came off a ship which had been damaged, causing the flooding of the storeroom and with the exception of the salt and sugar were sent away as directed by the Ministry of Food for re-processing.

Annual Tonnage of Fish

landed and inspected during the war.

<i>Year</i>				<i>Tons</i>
1939	..	..	..	38,581
1940	..	..	..	36,422
1941	..	..	..	17,865
1942	..	..	..	32,785
1943	..	..	..	29,196
1944	..	..	..	32,493
1945	..	..	..	46,303

Fish Meal Factory. This is situated at Castle Pill, and during 1945 the latest and most efficient machinery for making fish-meal has been installed. By this process the fish, offal, etc., is completely sterilised in about 15 minutes by a system of steaming in a steriliser. First of all the raw material is crushed by means of two rollers revolving in opposite directions. From here the crushed stuff goes into a screw conveyor which carries the material into the steriliser. The latter is a long cylinder, with a steam jacket provided inside with blade and transport apparatus, with the help of which a continual turning of the product, as well as a steady transport, is effected from one end to the other. The material then goes to 3 drying chambers. All vapours are condensed and carried into a drain.

VII. Hygiene of Crews' Spaces.

TABLE J.
CLASSIFICATION OF NUISANCES.

<i>Nationality of Vessel</i>	<i>Number Inspected during 1945</i>	<i>Defects of original construction</i>	<i>Structural defects through wear and tear</i>	<i>Dirt, Vermin and other conditions perjudicial to health</i>
British	951	nil	18	22
Other Nations	49	nil	nil	2

Venereal Diseases. There was an enormous increase in the incidence of venereal diseases during the war years. The County Council established a Clinic at Milford Haven, where a large number of patients were treated. Bacteriological work was carried on as before at the Swansea Hospital.

Pollution by Oil. There was extensive pollution of the waters of the Haven during the war years by ships in the Haven, and on one occasion from the Pembroke Dockyard. But the most serious pollution took place as the result of bombing of the Pembroke Dock oil tanks. On August 19th, 1940, in broad daylight, enemy aircraft dropped bombs on the great oil tanks; and this proved to be the commencement of bombing raids which went on intermittently for a considerable period and caused great havoc to the town of Pembroke Dock.

The oil tanks were set ablaze, and burnt continuously for three weeks; seven tanks were completely destroyed. The tanks were burst open by the heat and as they were situated on a hill overlooking the Haven a huge volume of oil eventually found its way into the Haven, and could be detected for miles around.

Shell-Fish. It is feared that the gross pollution of the Haven during the war has caused considerable damage to the oyster beds and to shellfish in general.

Aerial Navigation. The danger of infectious disease being carried by aircraft from one country to the other was fully realised by Health Authorities in pre-war times; and the matter became one of great importance during the war. Air flights are of such short duration that a person infected abroad with a dread disease may show no symptoms until he has proceeded from the home air-port to his destination in this country.

During the war there was a large R.A.F. station and a seaplane base at Pembroke Dock, and the Service Medical Officer was responsible for the arrangements for the prevention of infectious disease. But in 1944 the B.O.A.C. established a civil airport with Headquarters at Neyland, and your authority became responsible for all medical arrangements for the prevention of infectious disease in connection with passengers on Service aircraft. The Ministry of Health issued cards which were given to every passenger arriving at the port from abroad with instructions, if taken ill soon after arrival, to present the card to his medical attendant who, if he suspected acute infectious disease, would report the matter to the Medical Officer of Health where the person then was. If the case turned out to be plague, cholera, yellow fever or typhus, the Medical Officer in charge of the airport at which the patient arrived would be notified so that he might take action to trace and place under medical surveillance the other passengers who arrived on the same aircraft.

I am pleased to be able to say that there was complete co-operation in this work between the Service Medical Officer, the Immigration Officer, and your officials.

I wish to thank Mr. Logan, for his faithful service during the war years and for his help in compiling this report.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

H. O. WILLIAMS

